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Release of the Social Studies Draft Standards

Since the beginning of the year, the Tennessee Department of Education has sought feedback regarding revisions to the social studies standards.

- A committee was formed this fall to evaluate the current social studies standards.
- An initial course sequence proposal was released in January 2013 for feedback from educators.
- This proposal was revised based on thoughts and suggestions provided, resulting in an updated proposal that was communicated in February 2013.

Feedback from Tennessee educators has been very valuable throughout this process and will continue to be instrumental to the standards revision process.

Standards approval is the responsibility of the State Board of Education, a citizen-led board with the charge of overseeing curriculum for Tennessee. Standards are reviewed cyclically prior to the adoption of textbooks. The revision of social studies standards was based on substantial educator feedback about the need for rigorous and coherent social studies standards and the need for better information about student achievement in social studies.

As announced in January, there are three priorities guiding this standards revision:

- 1) Improve the coherence of the student experience grade to grade
- 2) Deepen the focus and rigor to match student expectations in other subject areas
- 3) Incorporate literacy skills to strengthen student reading and writing

The Tennessee Department of Education hired a Tennessee educator to manage the process of the social studies standards revision and established a council of ten educators from across the state to do the work of drafting the standards.

The members of this leadership council are:

- Gloria S. Moore, Humanities Supervisor, K-12, Hamilton County Schools
- Michelle Elaine Pieczura, Fourth Grade Teacher, Franklin Special School District
- Todd Wigginton, Coordinator of Social Studies, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
- Jaci E. Stewart, Curriculum Coordinator, K-12, Williamson County School District
- Nancy Dye, Social Studies Consulting Teacher, Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools
- Judy Wyatt Newgent, Social Studies Specialist, K-12, Knox County Schools
- David C. Rector, Social Studies Curriculum Specialist, K-12, Williamson County Schools
- Toni Marlin, Seventh Grade Teacher, Franklin Special School District
- Kelly Keen, Lead Teacher & Social Studies Professional Development Specialist, Knox County Schools
- Jared Myracle, Supervisor of Instruction, Gibson County

These draft standards are based in the belief that social studies courses offer an opportunity for students to experience history in context, appreciate the contingency of events, and to build a capacity to think critically about the world in which they live. In order for this to happen, the course sequence that students follow in the social studies curriculum must be one in which a course taken in a particular grade is a logical progression and outgrowth of the previous course. Only in this way can students gain an understanding of the connectedness of the disciplines that comprise social studies. All of the social studies courses offered under the revised standards will include a heavier emphasis on primary source documents and will provide teachers with guidance on ways to incorporate informational texts into these courses in ways that develop students' reading, writing and literacy capacities.

Draft standards for the following courses are available for review and feedback beginning April 2, 2013 and ending April 26, 2013:

Level	Grade/Course Name	Level	Grade/Course Name
K	The World Around Us	HS	World History and Geography: The Industrial Revolution to the Contemporary World
1	Tennessee's Place in America	HS	United States History and Geography: Post-Reconstruction to the Present
2	Life in the United States	HS	United States Government and Civics (half-credit)
3	World Geography and Cultures	HS	Economics (half-credit)
4	The History of America (to 1850)	HS	African-American History (elective)
5	The History of America (from 1850)	HS	Ancient History (elective)
6	World History and Geography: Early Civilizations through the Decline of the Roman Empire (5th century C.E.)	HS	Contemporary Issues (elective)
7	World History and Geography: The Middle Ages to the Exploration of the Americas	HS	Psychology (elective)
8	United States History and Geography: Colonization of North America to Reconstruction and the American West	HS	Sociology (elective)
		HS	World Geography (elective)

Along with revision of the content in each course, the standards documents have also been restructured. Depending upon the nature of the course, standards are listed either chronologically or topically. In Kindergarten through third grade, standards are organized by topic and by content strand, similar to the current organization of the standards in these grades. Fourth grade through eighth grade

standards are listed chronologically, as each of those grade levels pursue courses of study that follow a chronological timeline through successive historical eras. The organization of standards in high school courses is dependent on nature of the course.

Depending upon whether the standards are organized topically or chronologically in a grade or course, content strands and codes were used to divide or label a standard. The following content strands and codes were used in the draft of the revised social studies standards:

Content Strand Code	Content Strand	Definition
C	Culture	Culture encompasses similarities and differences among people including their beliefs, knowledge, changes, values, and traditions. Students will explore these elements of society to develop an appreciation and respect for the variety of human cultures.
E	Economics	Globalization of the economy, the explosion of population growth, technological changes and international competition compel students to understand both personally and globally production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Students will examine and analyze economic concepts such as basic needs versus wants, using versus saving money, and policy making versus decision making.
G	Geography	Geography enables the students to see, understand and appreciate the web of relationships between people, places, and environments. Students will use the knowledge, skills, and understanding of concepts within the six essential elements of geography: world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical systems, human systems, environment and society, and the uses of geography.
H	History	History involves people, events, and issues. Students will evaluate evidence to develop comparative and casual analyses, and to interpret primary sources. They will construct sound historical arguments and perspectives on which informed decisions in contemporary life can be based.
P	Government, Civics, and Politics	Governance establishes structures of power and authority in order to provide order and stability. Civic efficacy requires understanding rights and responsibilities, ethical behavior, and the role of citizens within their community, nation, and world.
TN	Tennessee Connection	Tennessee has a unique story and provides a more intimate view of the past in our present lives. As students connect with their own state's history and geography they will gain a greater perspective of the impact and significance of national history, movements, decisions, and ideas.

Please note these are draft standards and that comments and suggestions are encouraged. Feedback is strongly desired and we encourage educators and parents from across the state to provide thoughts on the strengths and the areas of improvement in the draft standards. Feedback will be used to inform revision prior to submission of final draft standards to the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education's vote on the first reading is on April 19, 2013.

The Social Studies Leadership Council specifically requests feedback and suggestions on the following areas:

1. Although the revised drafts represent a refined and more focused set of standards, there is still a large amount of content included in the third, fourth, and fifth grades. What feedback do you have on ways we can streamline this content?
2. The High School courses contain room to add specific content in geography. What feedback do you have on the most critical content missing in geography?
3. Many courses contain lists of individuals, events, etc. Are these lists helpful or are there other ways to ensure that these individuals, events, etc. are taught without listing them in the standards directly?

Feedback on these items will strengthen the drafts as they continue to be revised. Any questions about the standards or this process can be directed to tncore.question@tn.gov or jmyracle@k12tn.net.